

HEALTHBEAT

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Healthy, wealthy and wise!

By Lori Ryan, R.N. and Steve Shandera, LifeCare Manager, Saint Vincent Hospital and Health Center, Billings

Nearly 3,000 employees and their spouses are saying "Yes!" to saving money and staying healthy for life via state-sponsored health assessments.

With the 1989 assessment complete, results tell each individual how their lifestyle affects their health and their pocketbooks.

The program, named Healthbeat, is sponsored by the State Personnel Division and administered by LifeCare™ at Saint Vincent Hospital and Health Center, Billings.

Participants complete a health history questionnaire and a series of screening tests which are distilled into a health status report. Then individuals can take action to reduce their risks and improve their health.

The assessments are right in line with today's emphasis on preventive health care.

"The state of Montana is a leader as one of 15 states that sponsor wellness programs for employees," says Steve Shandera, LifeCare Manager.

"This is a winning program for the state as well as the individual employees!"

Stress tops chart

Healthbeat data shows that stress is the top health concern for state employees. Exercise was the most common trouble area in 1988, but stress among employees gained an upper hand in 1989.

This year, cholesterol numbers were high as well. Readings over 239 were found for 37 percent of the participants, and 21 percent had

Healthbeat Assessment Results			
Problem Area	Total Employees at Risk	Employees at High Risk	Employees at Moderate Risk
Stress	65%	19%	46%
Cholesterol	58%	21%	37%
Exercise	56%	31%	25%
Self-Care *	55%	0%	55%
Eating Habits	54%	0%	54%
Mental Health	43%	2%	41%
Back Care	42%	25%	17%
Driving	37%	15%	22%
Exams *	34%	0%	34%
Smoking	24%	11%	13%
Weight Control	21%	12%	9%
Alcohol	14%	3%	11%
Blood Pressure	12%	3%	9%

* Self-care includes medications taken, dietary calcium intake, dental care and pre-existing arthritis
Exams include frequency of colon exams for men, and breast self-exams, mammograms, pap exams and colon exams for women

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS 2,831

cholesterol readings between 200 and 239.

Paying the price

Sooner or later, poor health habits are a cost to everyone. Claims for health conditions commonly related to lifestyle cost the state health benefit plan \$4 million in 1988. Through individual claims, 83 plan members claimed over \$25,000 each. Of those claims, 33 were related to heart disease, 15 were for cancer, 8 were for premature infants and 5 were the result of automobile accidents.

Based on data from Healthbeat participants, the cost of continued unhealthy lifestyles is projected to be:

- 110 premature deaths in the next 10 years
- \$834,000 in health care costs each year
- 662 days lost to illness each year

But, if employees reduce their health risks by a collective 20 percent, they could:

- Save an estimated 22 lives in the next 10 years
- Decrease health care costs by \$167,000 each year
- Decrease lost work days by 132 days each year

Will one of those lives that is saved be yours? Say "Yes!"



Saint Vincent Hospital and Health Center

PLEASE RETURN

They're getting fit and feeling fine!

She's come a long weigh

"In six months I have lost over 60 pounds! I joined Weight Watchers the Thursday after Thanksgiving, after taking a CPR class and finding that I couldn't stay down on my knees to administer CPR. I was determined to lose weight during the holidays, at the hardest time of the year. Each night I ride a stationary bike that my parents gave me for Christmas. A friend at work was so impressed by my weight loss that she joined Weight Watchers and now we walk two miles a day. I feel wonderful! My blood pressure is down and I'm a different person. If you have the right attitude, you can lose weight. I still have weight to lose and I'm determined to do it. When I reach a loss of 100 pounds, the office is having a Centennial party for me!"



Bev Pickett

Snubbing that smoking urge

"My wife and I went to see our daughter and new granddaughter in California last Thanksgiving. We decided that it would be a good time to quit smoking so that we wouldn't be blowing smoke all over the baby. About the third week after quitting, I went through a sickening four-day withdrawal. Your body does go through a lot. I'm a senator and I thought it would be tough during the legislative session. But it wasn't that



Darryl Meyer

hard to refrain. Now I breathe much better, my sense of smell is better, and it's easier to keep my teeth clean. First, you have to make up your mind that you want to do it. It's not easy. If you want to breathe, stay away from cigarettes."

Dropped his cholesterol digits

"It began when I joined my boss, who had high blood pressure, in a hospital fitness program over a year ago. My wife and I changed our eating habits as a result. She's a registered nurse and had really noticed my screening results. I always knew my cholesterol was high, but I just figured it was hereditary. I used to take a 50-calorie spud and make it into a 200-calorie bomb. Now I eat more apples and oranges. I walk and ride my bike to work, a 5 1/2 mile distance, and I walk at the noon hour. My cholesterol was lowered from a reading of 440 to 199 in just three months. With all the information out on lowering cholesterol, I got to thinking that I should be concerned. I feel better, and I've taken off 15 pounds."



Bill Schweyen

Goodbye, cigarette habit

"I quit smoking two years ago. At the health screening, every page I turned said that I should quit. I always had stopped at a convenience store every morning and bought three cigarette packs. I thought, 'This is really stupid. It costs a lot and it may not be good for my health. When I decided to quit, I got support from a 12-Step group. I still carried cigarettes for three months—I was addicted! Instead of smoking, I put money in savings. I gained weight and didn't feel wonderful, like people said I would, but my cholesterol did drop. By my second health screening, I had increased my health age by five years. I thought



Jane Mast

I'd go brag a little to my doctor, but he put me on a program of weekly weigh-ins. I've lost 30 pounds and I feel much better. You may swear cigarettes aren't hurting you but you know deep down that they are."

Into a new health swing

"In 1987, I made light changes in my diet, hoping my high cholesterol reading would go away but there was no change in 1988. I went to a specialist and he recommended diet and aerobic exercise. I chose to exercise on my bicycle, set on a stand. It takes about 25 to 30 minutes; you can set aside that block of time and watch TV, read or listen to music. I really wanted to make it work, so I took a diet class as well, and I lost about 20 pounds. I was told the best I could hope for was a 10 to 20 percent reduction in my cholesterol reading, but it dropped 33 percent after 4 months. When I let my program slide, it jumped to above where I had started, so I started a strict 3-day-a-week program. Since I'm single, I also have time for volleyball, tennis and golf. Now I am meeting new people and socializing besides getting a workout and even competing for the first time. Growth doesn't stop with your physical well-being; it carries over into every area of your life."



Bob Rightmire

Health Notes

Top aerobic exercises (sport and calories used per hour)

Handball	548
Bicycling	512
Stationary bicycling (80 rpm)	500
Swimming (35 yds./min.)	450
Jogging (5 mph)	410
Aerobic dancing	370
Walking (4 mph)	290

The more you weigh, the more you'll burn!

This time they've really lost it!

By Kay Hoy

Within an 18-month period, over 2,500 pounds have been lost by participants in Weight Watchers at Work groups. This is equivalent to 20 people!

These men and women meet for support during their working day. Part of their problem was everyday office happenings - coffee breaks, vending machines, office parties, and stress-prompted eating. Now, their solution is an at work weight reduction program.

"During the entire program, I was never hungry and I felt better about myself. I was doing something for myself that only I could do, and it's working."

-Successful at-work dieter.

When a group forms, a trained leader conducts the meetings on-site for the employee's convenience. The program is a 10-week series of 45-minute meetings during the lunch hour.

"The at-work program is an excellent way to do the one thing we enjoy doing the most - eating! But we're learning to do it right, lose weight, and enjoy the process."

-Marge, an at-work member.

The plan is straightforward. First, the food plan offers a surprising variety of foods including french fries, croissants, nachos and even chocolate cake. Leaders stress a sensible exercise program that is tailored to a member's pace. During weight loss, self-discovery is important as members reshape eating habits and face eating challenges.



Members meet for lunches featuring fantastic low-calorie, high-nutrition foods.

Key to the program is group support. Encouragement and motivation from co-workers helps these employees work through the pressures and challenges of the work place.

"This at-work program is great. I've lost 60 pounds so far. I feel much better physically and much better about myself. Shopping for clothes is fun, too since I've gone down six sizes!"

-An at-work weight-loss fan.

More information is available from wellness coordinator Linda Kaiser at 444-3946.

Snacks: reason and rhyme

Almost any food can be healthy if you're snacking for the right reasons. Assess your snack attack.

I want something to hold me until dinner.

Try fiber and protein - a rice cake with a slice of lowfat cheese.

I'm not really hungry; I just want to nibble.

Go for low-fat, high-crunch foods. Popcorn without the butter is a perfect example. Or spend time trying to break into pumpkin seeds.

I need an energy boost.

Naturally sweet snacks like raisins, apple slices and grapes will pick you up.

The pro's of peanut butter

- Rich in vegetable protein
- Each tablespoon contains a gram of fiber
- Rich in B vitamins and niacin
- Buying natural peanut butter allows you to pour off some of the extra fat



Healthbeat Reimbursement Program

By Linda Kaiser, Wellness Coordinator, State Personnel Division

The Healthbeat Reimbursement Program is offering partial reimbursement to employees and retired employees who enroll in eligible programs to improve their health.

Programs have already been approved in all major cities in Montana. Others may also qualify.

What it is.

For employees outside Helena:

On-site programs are possible in any location with a sufficient number of employees. Suitable programs include smoking cessation, approved dietary programs, and beginning aerobic fitness classes.

If you're interested, check with your department on a possible location and the number of interested co-workers and call Linda Kaiser at 444-3871.

For employees in Helena:

Employees in Helena may take advantage of existing on-site programs, or they may look into starting one. The following programs are now available on-site in Helena:

- Weight Watchers, noon hour
- Beginning Aerobics, morning class, noon hour class, evening class after work

You may participate if you are an employee or retired employee eligible to participate in the State Health Insurance Program.

How it works.

If you: Attend 75 percent of the sessions of an approved, introductory cardiovascular fitness program for three months...

We will: Reimburse \$35 of the cost of the program.

If you: Are a smoker and attend 75 percent of the sessions of an approved smoking cessation program...

We will: Reimburse 75 percent of allowable charges for the program.

If you: 1. Are identified as "high risk" through the Healthbeat screening or by your physician because of elevated cholesterol, elevated blood pressure, or excess weight and 2. Attend 75 percent of the sessions of an approved cholesterol/blood pressure reduction program and/or weight control program or an introductory fitness program...

We will: Reimburse 75 percent of allowable charges for the program.

To sign up

Please take the following steps:

1. Obtain a Healthbeat application from the Employee Benefits office in the State Personnel Division by calling Linda Kaiser at 444-3871. You must have a completed application form on file in order to receive a reimbursement.
2. At that time, determine if the program you wish to attend has been approved. If not, also obtain a Healthbeat Program Information Form and have it completed by the provider to return to the Employee Benefits Office.
3. After you have received notice that your application and the program have been approved and you have attended 75 percent of the program session, submit the following for reimbursement:
 - a. copies of attendance sheets
 - b. a cancelled check, receipt or some other proof of payment.Your reimbursement check should arrive within 3 to 4 weeks.

You must submit your request for reimbursement within six months from the date you start your program.

Take advantage of this offer!

You have nothing to lose but some bad habits – and you have much to gain, including a longer life and a greater capacity to enjoy it.

If interested, contact Linda Kaiser at 444-3871.

Limitations:

This offer is limited by available funds. Funds will be committed on a first come, first serve basis except that priority will be given to employees with identified health risks. Programs must meet established criteria to be approved for reimbursement. Program costs may not exceed established cost ceilings.

Pessimism can make you sick

When you shift into pessimism to explain bad events, you're headed for potential health blues as well. Pessimists tend to: blame themselves or a "cloud of doom" for negative life events, avoid doctors, shun medical advice, take poor care of themselves when they're ill, and not have emotional support when they most need it.

So, buck up and believe things will get better. Optimism is good for your overall well-being.

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